



**State Representative
Zack Hudgins**

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Committees:

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Zack Hudgins

2006 Legislative Session Preview



Dear Neighbors,

With a new year comes a new legislative session in Olympia. It's a short one this year – only 60 days. Nevertheless, I've spent months meeting with citizens and planning bills to bring to the state capital. We need to keep building upon our accomplishments from last year; to provide better schools for our children, more affordable health care for our state's families, and a stronger business climate for all who work in Washington.

In this newsletter you'll find some of my ideas to strengthen our state's economy, as well as provide some peace of mind through improved emergency preparedness.

A handwritten signature of Zack Hudgins in a cursive script.



**I believe real family
values means valuing
the things families
value, like affordable
health care, job
security, and time
with your kids.**

Save the date!

Please join me for a
Town Hall meeting Feb.
18th, 10:00 AM at the
Liquor Control Board
Distribution Center
(4401 East Marginal Way,
Seattle). It'll be a great
opportunity to share
your views on important
issues for the 2006
legislative session.



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Emergency Checklist

- ☐ Have at least a three-day supply of food, water, clothes, medical supplies and other necessary equipment for everyone in your family.
- ☐ Keep a small amount of extra cash available. If the power is out, ATM machines will not operate.

Home Safety

- ☐ Locate shutoff valves for water, gas, and electricity. Take the time now to learn how to shut off the valves, before an earthquake or other disaster.
- ☐ Conduct tsunami, earthquake and fire drills every six months.
- ☐ Establish all the possible ways to exit your home.

Vital Information

- ☐ Make copies of your vital records and store them in a safe deposit box in another city or state. Make sure your originals are stored safely.
- ☐ Take photos and videotapes of your home and your valuables. Make copies and place them in a safe deposit box in another city or state.

Suggested Emergency Kit Checklist

- ☐ Non-perishable food, cans of food with manual can opener
- ☐ Personal medication, pills, & prescriptions
- ☐ Baby needs; food, diapers, etc.
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Battery operated radio and flashlight with extra batteries
- ☐ Drinking water (1 gallon per person per day) and other drinks
- ☐ Blankets, pillows, sleeping bags
- ☐ Sanitary supplies
- ☐ Cards, books, small games
- ☐ Road maps
- ☐ Wet and cold weather clothing
- ☐ Pet foods and supplies
- ☐ Other items important to your personal safety or comfort

Put together small versions for the office, school and car

For more info contact:

Rep. Zack Hudgins 1-800-562-600.

Preparing for emergencies

The Gulf Coast hurricanes and other disasters around the world brought our own readiness to the forefront of everyone's mind. Between sessions, lawmakers from the House and Senate traveled around our state meeting with citizens and experts discussing how to best protect your family during a disaster. Based on what we've learned, we've drafted a number of reforms we hope to pass during the 2006 session. Those reforms include measures to protect your family in case of:

- floods or wildfires;
- a major earthquake or tsunami;
- a volcanic eruption or mudflow from Mt. Rainier; or
- a global bird flu pandemic.



MAKING HEALTH CARE MORE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE

As I reported last summer, the Legislature has taken significant steps aimed at making medical coverage more affordable and more available.

For instance, a Prescription Drug Purchasing Consortium lets local governments, businesses, unions, and uninsured citizens team up to keep costs down. We also enacted measures to provide coverage for thousands of additional children in our state.

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Mission accomplished? Not by a long shot. Long-term care is still a huge issue. I believe that our system must emphasize personal dignity and independence. In addition, we want to reduce preventable disabilities that require long-term care.

Another bill I hope to pass this year would create a small-business health care pool. This proposal would help more employers provide affordable coverage for their employees by leveraging bulk discounts.

PREPARING KIDS AND WORKERS FOR THE FUTURE

An educated workforce is a must for our growing economy. I am proud that the Legislature fully funded the voter-approved education initiatives to reduce class sizes and improve teacher pay, I-728 and I-732.

I'm also pleased we funded room for 7,900 more students at our 2-year and 4-year colleges and bolstered



the State Need Grant program, helping to make college more accessible and affordable for many more high school graduates.

Providing a quality education for our students goes hand in hand with meeting the needs of our state's employers. It is absolutely critical that our local businesses have access to the skilled workforce they need in order to compete in the global economy. It is equally important that we succeed in preparing our young people for the jobs of today and of tomorrow.

- As part of an effort to expand educational opportunities, I'll be supporting legislation this session to improve our state's investment in workforce training, including enhancing partnerships between our employers and local community and technical colleges.
- I also want to improve high school skill centers, providing occupational and technical training to students.

Tackling outsourcing of state jobs

No one likes to see jobs – especially family-wage jobs – leave our state. When the state outsources work, we need to ask ourselves, are we really saving taxpayer dollars? Or are we ultimately hurting ourselves by eliminating jobs here, leading to a greater need for state services? It's our money as taxpayers and we should get the best value for it. If we create jobs here and the money stays in our state, it's better in the long run.

Last year, I called for the creation of a task force to study the state's usage of job outsourcing and offshoring. As Co-Chair of the task force, I've led meetings with representatives from several different state agencies and businesses in order to grasp the extent of the situation.

Developing energy for the 21st Century

This session I will continue to take action to promote energy independence. I'll look to remove some of the existing barriers for the development

and use of biofuels. For example, I'll look at jumpstarting the local market for biodiesel and biogas by using it in the state fleet and expanding the network of gas stations that offer these fuels.

This will give our farmers a market for biofuel-related crops and make Washington a national leader in new energy technologies.



HELPFUL TIPS TO LOWER YOUR WINTER BILLS

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina the Federal Energy Information Administration predicts that consumers can expect to spend anywhere from 50 to 70 percent more in energy costs this winter. The federal government as a result of recent budget cuts under funded an important government program known as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

This cut could leave thousands of Washington's elderly and needy families without heat this winter. I have supported legislation to fund a one time supplement to increase this energy assistance fund to help out Washington's most vulnerable.

If you or someone you know is having trouble paying their home

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energy bill, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program may be able to help.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/liheap/brochure.html>

Energy-efficient practices are still by far the easiest and most effective way to protect our environment and our wallets. If you'd like to find out how you can dramatically cut energy bills this winter, visit: <http://www.wutc.wa.gov/consumerguides/energy>.

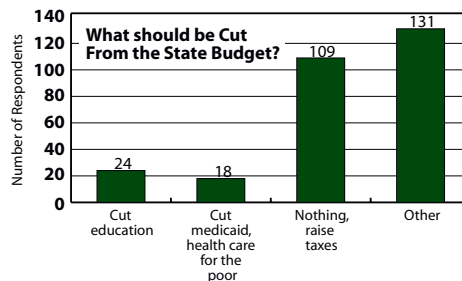
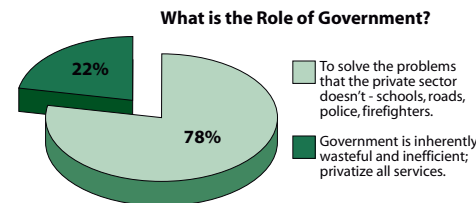
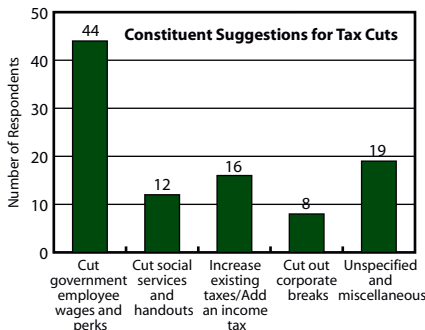
Supporting our military families

I saw firsthand during my time in Iraq that being a member of our armed forces or our state's National Guard can mean sacrificing a comfortable lifestyle for one of service to our country during times of conflict. That can sometimes mean time away from loved ones, as well as jobs that help support those loved ones back home.

I believe that our servicemen and women deserve all the support they can get when they're called to duty, and that's why I'm calling for a law to help ease some of their burden. My proposal, HB 2439, would exempt a military family's home from the state sales tax if they are relocated within three years of their purchase. Most families plan their home purchase by looking 5, 10, or 30 years into the future. When duty calls, the state should understand.

Survey Results

Last year I asked for your thoughts on the role and direction of our state government. Here are some of the results:



Keeping up with the Legislature

An easy way to track bills and votes is by visiting the state Legislature's official website, at: <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature/>

There, you'll find information on everything from current bills under consideration to state history and culture.

If you'd like to contact me personally, feel free to call our toll-free hotline at: 800.562.6000 (Hearing Impaired: 800.635.9993)